(b) whether it is also a fact that the Bt. gene in GM crops has been found to be toxic and Coalition for GM Free India (CFGMFI) have established that Bt. gene affects human and livestock health adversely; and

(c) if so, when Japan and several European countries have banned cultivation of GM food crops, the reasons for allowing its entry without taking adequate precautions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Introduction of any new technology may have both beneficial and adverse impacts and requires careful evaluation of the long term sustainable benefits. The Government of India is following a policy of case by case approval process for transgenic crops. The product is approved for environmental release only when there is a clear socio-economic and technical justification for release of the product.

(b) GM crops having Bt. gene are being consumed in several countries and there was no scientific evidence generated either by CFGMFI or any other organization on toxicity of Bt. gene to human and animal health. All genetically modified food is tested for toxicity and allergenicity prior to its approval for human consumption.

(c) Japan and European countries consumes GM food crops and some of the countries like Spain, France, Germany do cultivate GM crops. Bt. Cotton is the only transgenic crop approved for commercial cultivation in India. No GM food crop has been permitted for commercial cultivation or marketing in India.

I.T. Companies neglecting health and environment norms

2328. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether international environment activities have voiced concern against major I.T. Companies in India for neglecting health and environment safeguards;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken to ensure that the I.T. Companies comply with health and environment norms?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and will be placed on the Table of the House.

Primary census data of Tigers

2329. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 15 out of 17 tiger States have failed to file their primary census data with regard to tiger population;

(b) if so, which States have filed their census data, and which ones have not yet filed the same and the details of the tiger population, as posted, in each State; and

(c) whether any dependable and effective way has been found or evolved for arriving at accurate and correct population of tigers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA):(a) and (b) Phase-I data pertaining to the All India tiger Estimation, using the refined methodology, has been received from 15 States, which include Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Mizoram, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Uttaranchal. Phase-I data has not been received so far from Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The Phase-I data provides information only on the presence and relative abundance of tigers. The population estimation of tiger requires further sampling followed by analysis (Phases II & III).

(c) The refined methodology of estimating tigers involves sampling and estimation of tiger density in different strata using a combination of methods, *i.e.* camera trap, digital photography of pugmarks to fix identities by a computer based recognition technique based on a mark-capture statistical framework, and correlation with other data, *e.g.* physical signs of tiger presence, prey-base, apart from DNA characterization of scats at places. The methodology has been approved by the Tiger Task Force constituted by National Board for Wildlife. The process involves three phases and its Phase-I alone has been completed and the latest estimation figures would be known after completion of Phase-III of the process.